

**To:** Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]  
**From:** Ostrander, David  
**Sent:** Tue 9/8/2015 12:28:54 AM  
**Subject:** FW: EPA statement on Gold King mine release

DRAFT. Not sure if sent out

**From:** Mylott, Richard  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 06, 2015 10:52 AM  
**To:** Card, Joan; Ostrander, David; McGrath, Shaun; Way, Steven; Hestmark, Martin  
**Cc:** Smith, Paula  
**Subject:** EPA statement on Gold King mine release

I have 3-4 pending press calls, understand we are waiting for more info-- but would like to share this statement as soon as appropriate. Please review. Draft below.

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Thanks for your call regarding the Gold King mine release. I expect to have additional information later this afternoon. Rich Mylott 303-312-6654

### **EPA Statement on Gold King Mine Release**

Yesterday, an EPA and State Division of Reclamation Mining and Safety team working to investigate and address contamination at the Gold King Mine in San Juan County, Colo. unexpectedly triggered a large release of mine waste water into the upper portions of Cement Creek. Initial estimates are that the release contained approximately 1M gallons of water that was held behind unconsolidated debris near an abandoned mine portal. There were several workers at the site at the time of the breach, all were unharmed.

Following the release, the Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment notified water users downstream so they could take appropriate steps to turn off intakes until the contaminated water passes. The Town of Silverton does not take water out of the affected portions of Cement Creek. Due to current and longstanding water quality impairment associated

with heavy metals there are no fish populations in the Cement Creek watershed and populations in the Animas River have historically been impaired for several miles downstream of Silverton.

The primary environmental concern is the pulse of contaminated water containing sediment and metals flowing as an orange-colored discharge downstream through Cement Creek and into the Animas River. The water associated with the release is obvious and highly discolored. As a precaution, EPA recommends that recreational users of the Animas River avoid contact with or use of the river until the pulse of mine water passes. Over the next several days, EPA teams will be sampling and investigating downstream locations to confirm that the release has passed and poses no additional concerns for aquatic life or water users.